

BREWSTER, WILLIAM

DUXBURY TERCENTENARY

1566

# Bradford's History Of The Plymouth Plantation Relates In Full The Story Of The Pilgrims

Was Found In London And  
Restored To Massachusetts

*Lilacs Planted By Brewster Still  
Flourishing*

Brewster Moved To Duxbury And Cleared A New  
Farm When He Was 64 Years Of Age.

BREWSTER, WILLIAM

It seems a pity that the chronicles of the early Duxbury settlers were so neglected. Among those who landed in the Mayflower were three men of education, well qualified to write, William Bradford, William Brewster and Edward Winslow.

One cannot be thankful enough for what Bradford wrote and that after many years his History of the Plymouth Plantation was found in the possession of the Bishop of London and through the efforts of certain public-spirited men was restored to the State of Massachusetts. But we would like a more detailed account of Brewster's every day life after he built his house at the Nook near his great friend Myles Standish who survived him by thirteen years. The view from the Brewster homestead site, while not as extensive or beautiful as that from where Standish built, is fair enough, overlooking the eminence on which later there was to be a monument to the doughty Captain. From this hill on clear days can be seen Provincetown where the Pilgrims landed after their tempestuous voyage across the Atlantic from Southampton.

Edward Winslow, a young Englishman of talent and education, was also competent to write and in fact did write accounts of the early days after the landing of the Mayflower in 1620.

William Brewster himself was educated at Oxford and after the Pilgrim band settled in Leyden taught the youth of that city English through the medium of the Latin tongue. He also wrote an English grammar and subsequently established himself as a printer and published theological books which could not be safely published in England.

For this he became a fugitive from justice and strange to say sought safety in London, the capital of the country trying to cause his arrest. There in the vast city he remained in obscurity until the sailing of the Mayflower.

Perhaps one should not be too critical of these early settlers for living more. Life was extremely hard with them and often they were engaged in a life and death struggle for mere existence. Under such circumstances it was not to be wondered at that little except what was absolutely necessary was written.

It must be remembered that Elder Brewster was practically the minister in the Infant Colony during the first nine years of its existence or till a minister was procured. As presiding Elder he preached twice each Sunday and unless he repeated his sermons, he must be credited with a considerable literary output. After the minister for the Colony was secured, Brewster felt free to follow his old friend Myles Standish and build a house on the Nook at Duxbury not far from the latter. At the time of this removal Brewster was sixty-four years old and that should assume at this age the labors of clearing his large tract reveals the courage of the man. For his acreage was considerable, extending from the homestead site across the low marshy land to what is now Standish street almost up to where the path began leading to the grist mill at

stirring of affections, also very plain and distinct. He had a singular good gift in prayer, in ripping up the heart and conscience before God. He always thought it were better for ministers to pray oftener and divide their prayers, than be long and tedious in the same, except upon solemn and special occasions, as in days of humiliation and the like."

Although it has been impossible to prove or disprove the truth of the tradition, the legend is quite widespread in Duxbury that the original slip of the lilacs on the Brewster homestead was brought over on the Mayflower by the Elder from Holland. If it be true that a lilac slip was brought over in 1620 by the Elder, is it not more likely that it was brought from England than Holland for the Elder had been living in the former country some months before he joined the Mayflower? But why say more as to where the lilacs came from or who brought them? There they are on the original Brewster homestead site, mutual testimonials to the fact that the Elder cared for such things at a time when beauty, as such, was somewhat neglected in a severe struggle for existence. And there they bloom bravely year after year uncared for but flourishing, as much as to say to the present generation of Duxbury dwellers that they may have almost forgotten this grand old man who lived there but his old friend the lilacs have not.

The Elder died April 28, 1644, at the age of seventy-eight, universally mourned and was laid to rest on Burial Hill, Plymouth. Of a naturally pacific nature some thing his make up had compelled him to rebel against the established religious order when desecrated silence would have brought him honors and competence. To attain his ideals he migrated to foreign soil in Holland and endured the hardships and privations of a tempestuous voyage across the Atlantic. While in making up he was a pacifist, he fought like a good soldier for what he considered right.

REUBEN PETERSON, M.

